



MONTHLY

News and Views from the Connecticut Association of Home Inspectors, Inc.

December 2006

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Meeting Dates

- Jan 24** *Plumbing and Water Purification – Dale Abbott, A-Water Solutions of CT, LLC*
- Feb 28** *Wood destroying Insects - John O'Brien, MasterShield*
- Mar 28** *Chimneys – Jim Jaffe, CT Chimney & Vent*

Holiday Inn
201 Washington Ave
North Haven
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Knob and Tube Wiring

Article submitted by Ken Mita

Courtesy of the Society of Professional Real Estate Inspectors. (SPREI)

Nearly all homes were originally wired with what is known as knob and tube wiring. At the time this was the state of the art electrical wiring. Individual circuits consisted of individual wires running along or through joists and wall framing members.

The circuit wires were supported by knobs or ran through tubes. Knobs and tubes were actually insulators usually constructed of a ceramic material with a few being glass. This material was chosen because of its durability and non-conductive nature.

Besides supports, knobs and tubes were also used as devices to separate wires as, very early on, electrical wires were not insulated. No type of grounding conductor was used either - which added an element of danger with this type wiring.

Up to this time, little was known about what the effects of alternating current, aging, and climatic changes would have on wiring. Few people realized that the wires would expand, contract, sag or fray. Short circuiting and fires were commonplace. When it was finally discovered that uninsulated wires were a major cause of home fires, it prompted manufacturers to develop and implement an effective insulation for electrical wires.

Today, there is not a single municipality in the United States that allows this type of circuitry to be installed in a new home. Most, if not all, insurance companies will not insure a home which employs knob and tube wiring. Why? Because knob and tube circuitry is, at best, a fire waiting to happen.

Many older homes still have knob and tube wiring present and live through part or all of the dwelling. During the course of an inspection, particular care must be taken to determine if knob and tube wiring is, in fact, present.

Areas where knob and tube are most clearly visible is the attic and basement. Unless the attic or basement have been finished, knob and tube wiring should nearly jump out at the inspector. Older garages often still have the original knob and tube wiring present. This, in itself, is a dead giveaway that it was or is present in the home which should clue the inspector into looking very closely in the home.

Does the client have a right to know that inferior wiring is present in the home? Not only do they have a right - but an inspector has an absolute obligation to inform the client of the presence of knob and tube wiring. Should the home suddenly experience a fire, one of the first areas a fire inspector will look into is the electrical system. When it is determined that knob and tube was present and the possible cause of the fire, the client will most likely seek relief from the inspection company.

Besides the potential for catastrophic damage, the cost of upgrading is very expensive. Several thousand dollars can be spent for upgrading even a small house. These costs too could be recoverable by the client if they are not advised of the wiring present in

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President's Corner

Bernie Caliendo

Here we are at the close of another year. The real estate market has been going through some dramatic changes this year in comparison to the last 5 years. Any changes like these call for a smart business person to look at what their company has done in the past year and focus on what it will take to adapt to the marketplace in the coming year. The value for your services should not decline, no matter what is happening in the marketplace. You are not selling a product that is sitting on a shelf or in a showroom and you need to move the inventory. Sale prices on homes may come down but does that make you less knowledgeable to perform a quality inspection? Having the same liability exposure and getting paid less for the same service you have always offered is plain old "just not worth it!" "I do it cheap" is not what I want on my business card. Believe it or not, when there is less work available, you can have less exposure and make more money by raising your fees to get paid for what you and your professional services are worth.

Every year you should evaluate your business plan. Make revisions when needed to be sure you are doing what you set out to do. If you do not have a business plan, create one and follow it. If you don't know what one is or how to create or develop one, research business plan development at your local library, on the internet or hire a qualified professional. No matter how small you are, you should have a business plan. "I'm going to work till I die" is not a business plan. Insurance and asset protection is essential. The lawyers are looking for DEEP pockets. If you think "if I drop or don't carry insurance the lawyers will look somewhere else", THINK AGAIN!

Don't forget to consider any vehicle, office equipment or tools purchased before the end of the year. Check with your accountant. If you do your own books, make sure you are taking full advantage of deductible write-offs. When it comes to profits, if you don't put it back into your business, you will be spending it on taxes.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and myself, we wish you and your families a Merry, Happy, Holy and Healthy Holiday Season and a Great, Happy and Prosperous New Year!!

**December
No Monthly Meeting**

Public Hearing on Additions to the "Standards of Practice"

On Friday, December 15, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at the Department of Consumer Protection, Room 119, a public hearing will be held for anyone who would like to speak for or against the proposed addition to the Standards of Practice concerning homes serviced by wells.

A copy of these new regulations were published in our November 06' newsletter and can be viewed on our web site under newsletters. Anyone wishing to speak or submit testimony needs to supply your original text and 10 copies to: Commissioner Edwin R. Rodrigues, DCP, Room 103, State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 05106

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the home.

Not as a precaution but as a necessity, houses wired with knob and tube circuits will most likely have to be rewired completely. The client must be advised verbally and in writing to consult with a licensed electrical contractor for the corrective measures needed along with cost estimates.

Finally, there are those that believe that knob and tube wiring can be safely used if properly maintained. But should the inspector assume that the client believes that? No! At least not if they intend on staying an inspector for very much longer.

Articles published in the CAHI Monthly are the sole opinion of the author. CAHI does not endorse or state a position for or against the content of said articles.



The CAHI Library

Our Library has re-opened. Anyone who would like to donate books, tapes, CDs, DVDs or any other educational material related to the home inspection profession, please feel free to contact Director Tom Hauswirth at beaconinspections@sbcglobal.net or call him at (860) 526-3355.

The library is open to members only and content can be viewed on our web site under the "Members Area" section. You must login. If you are not registered, you can register on our home page to access the message board, library, photos and special e-mails.

The library policy for borrowing is as follows:

- Free loaning (another membership benefit)
- Contact Tom with your request, including title of material.
- Request must be made by the 20th of the month and will be made available at our monthly meetings.
- Returns must be made by the borrower at the next monthly meeting unless a request for an extension is made to Tom.
- You are responsible for any loss or damage

Education never stops. Refreshing your knowledge keeps you sharp!

Recall of Weil-McLain Ultra Series Gas Boilers

Submitted by Michael Colavecchio

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Office of Information and Public Affairs
Washington, DC 20207

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 31, 2006

Release #07-020

Firm's Recall Hotline: (866) 426-6172

CPSC Recall Hotline: (800) 638-2772

CPSC Media Contact: (301) 504-7908

Weil-McLain Recalls Ultra Series Boilers for Carbon Monoxide Hazard

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with the firm named below, today announced a voluntary recall of the following consumer product. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.

Name of Product: Weil-McLain Ultra Series Gas Boilers

Units: About 16,000

Manufacturer: Weil-McLain, of Michigan City, Ind.

Hazard: These boilers were manufactured for use with natural gas, but could have a blue tag incorrectly indicating to installers that they are intended for use with LP (propane) gas. If an installer connects one of the boilers to LP gas without installing a propane conversion kit, carbon monoxide (CO) can build up due to incomplete combustion, posing a risk of CO poisoning.

Incidents/Injuries: Weil-McLain is aware of one incident

where two consumers reported CO poisoning when the boiler installed in their home was connected to LP gas.

Description: The recall involves Weil-McLain Ultra 80, Ultra 105, Ultra 155, Ultra 230 and Ultra 310 condensing, high-efficient, gas-fired boilers for space heating. The user's manual and installation manual have "Ultra Gas-Fired Water Boiler" on the cover. The boilers are wrapped in a glossy silver/flat black jacket and either stand on the floor or are wall-mounted. The serial numbers range from CP5071716 through CP5327000. When the panel on the front of the boiler is removed, a bar-coded label with the serial number is located on the lower right hand side of the boiler itself. "Weil-McLain" is written on the front panel of the boilers.

Sold by: Plumbing and heating wholesale distributors to plumbers and contractors nationwide from May 2005 through July 2006 for between \$4,000 and \$7,000.

Manufactured in: United States

Remedy: Consumers who had a Weil-McLain Ultra series boiler installed for use with propane and have not already been contacted by their installer should contact the installer or a heating professional for a free safety inspection. If the boiler was not installed with a propane conversion kit, one will be installed at the time of the inspection at no charge. Heating professionals may contact Weil-McLain Technical Service at (219) 879-6561 for more information.

Consumer Contact: For more information, call Weil-McLain toll-free at (866) 426-6172 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. CT Monday through Friday, or visit the firm's web site at www.weil-mclain.com.

To see this recall on CPSC's web site, including pictures of the recalled product, please go to:

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml07/07020.html>

Mark Your Calendar



January 13th – CT Law Seminar

Required CT Law Seminar for licensing renewal (June 2007) Saturday, January 13, 2007, at the Holiday Inn, North Haven with Attorney Kent Mawhinney.

January 24th – Monthly Meeting

Dale Abbott from A-Water Solutions of CT, LLC. Presenting a plumbing and water conditioning equipment seminar.

February 28th – Monthly Meeting

John O'Brien from MasterShield will present a seminar on wood destroying insects. What to look for and what you need to know!

March 28th – Monthly Meeting

Jim Jaffe from CT Chimney & Vent will conduct a seminar on all aspects of chimneys including parts, problems and repairs.



CT Law Seminar Featuring Attorney Kent Mawhinney

Sponsored by CAHI

Saturday, January 13, 2007
8:30 to 11:30 am

Holiday Inn
201 Washington Ave (Rt 5)
North Haven, CT

COME EARLY, the doors close at 8:30 a.m.

Anyone who has attended our law seminars in the past and has heard Kent speak realizes he is the most informative and well received presenter on the CT Law required 3 hour course in the state today! Since CAHI only sponsors this course once a year in January and licensing renewal is coming up in June 07, don't wait till the last minute and be stuck trying to find a provider. The CT Law course is not available every month by any provider. Get it in your continuing education portfolio for license renewal now!

CAHI provides the best deal in the state. \$99 for everything!

- Early start time and a weekend date
- Continental breakfast
- Refreshments at the breaks
- Conference room setting
- Attendance certificates which meet the minimum requirements as set forth by the Home Inspection Licensing Board
- Free parking
- Easy on/off access to I-91 (exit 12 from north and south. Take a right off either exit. Holiday Inn is on the left).

You have three ways to **register**:

1. CAHI's web site (www.ctinspect.com). Click on "Special Events", pick "Law Seminar", fill out the form, click on Check-out, fill in the credit card information (this is a secure page) and you're done.
2. Mail a check for \$99.00 made out to CAHI, along with your name, address and phone/email to CAHI Treasurer, 18 Garden Place, Derby, CT 06418.

This course is open to all - members, non-members, inspectors, interns, trades people, etc.

Home inspector interns are not required to complete this seminar during your internship. However, information at this seminar is invaluable to all and some content may be of help for the required CT Law Exam before licensure. CAHI recommends interns attend.

Knowledge is the basis of your expertise.

ASK THE ATTORNEY

Question: Are home inspector's reports (and/or the information reported on) considered copyrighted material without filing with the U.S. Copyright Office? If so, who is the owner, the inspector or the client? If the inspector is the owner, what wording in their contract (pre-inspection agreement) should be used?



Answer: A copyright is a form of federal protection that exists for both published and unpublished original works of authorship when they are placed in a tangible form. Original works of authorship may include home inspection reports. Under the Federal Copyright Act, the owner of the copyright has the exclusive right to reproduce the work, produce derivative works, distribute, perform and display the work publicly. If a home inspector would like to afford themselves the protections set forth within the Copyright Act, they need to register the same with the U.S. Copyright Office and include the statutory copyright notice on all copies of the work that are publicly distributed. Therefore, if a home inspector has developed their own reporting system, then they may want to copyright the static portion of the report. It would neither be practical nor economical to copyright the unique information set forth within the report concerning each inspection. If you are unwilling or do not have sufficient resources to copyright the static portion of your report, you can still place a copyright notice on the report. This will provide you with limited common law protection. Whether the Federal Copyright Act or common law copyright protection is taken advantage of, the notice, at a minimum, must contain a ©, the date the requested copyrighted work was first published and the name of the owner of the copyright. An example of said notice is ©2006 Bernard Caliendo.

As with many areas of the law, there are attorneys who specialize in copyright law and they can assist you with regard to protecting your interest.



TECHNICAL TOPICS

Form No. TT-026A
August 2006

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SMALL CRACKS IN THE FLANGE AT ENDS OF I-JOISTS

For prefabricated wood I-joists, it is not uncommon to find small cracks that radiate from a corner of the flange groove, especially at the joist ends. The intent of this publication is to address the effect of the small cracks on the I-joist design capacities.

In North America, the web-to-flange joints of the I-joists are typically manufactured using grooves in the flanges. Although the exact geometry of the groove varies among manufacturers, the chemistry and mechanics of the web-to-flange joint require a very tight fit between the web and flange materials in the groove. As a hygroscopic material, wood swells or shrinks when it gains or loses moisture in response to changing relative humidity and temperature in the surrounding environment. Therefore, small cracks may occur during transit or storage of the I-joists at a corner of the groove where the stress concentration is high. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable at the joist ends. From an engineering point of view, these small cracks have the potential of affecting only the bearing load capacities of the I-joists at end and intermediate reactions.

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Structural capacities of the I-joists manufactured in North America are evaluated based on full-size tests. In accordance with ASTM D 5055, *Standard Specification for Establishing and Monitoring Structural Capacities of Prefabricated Wood I-Joists*, qualification tests are required to be conducted using specimens sampled by a third-party inspection agency, such as APA, from typical production. These qualification specimens often contain small cracks. Test results from these specimens are not excluded from the product evaluation process for establishing the design capacities of the I-joists. Therefore, the effect of small cracks on the I-joist structural capacities, including the bearing load capacities at end and intermediate reactions, has been accounted for in the published design capacities of the I-joists.

In addition, for the bearing load capacities at end and intermediate reactions, ASTM D 5055 prescribes a reduction factor (including a factor of safety) that is 13 percent larger than the conventional factor of 2.1 to account for minor damage to joist ends. This additional factor along with the inclusion of small cracks in the qualification process, as mentioned above, provides justification that these cracks occurring at a corner of the flange groove do not affect the published design capacities of the I-joists as long as they do not develop into deep splits through the flange depth.

Technical Services Division

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www.apawood.org

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The Licensing Board meetings are held at 9:30 am,
Department of Consumer Protection, Room 117, 165
Capitol Avenue, Hartford.

The public is always welcome.

E-mail Bernie Caliendo for the latest meeting schedule
at bsurehomeinspect@juno.com